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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 000602

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NEA FOR DANIN  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/26/2028  
TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EG](#)  
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON U.S. NAVY INCIDENT AT SUEZ (CORRECTED  
COPY: SIPDIS CAPTION ONLY ADDED)

REF: A. CAIRO 597  
[1](#)B. CAIRO 581

Classified By: Ambassador Francis Ricciardone for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: On March 25 our NCIS officer witnessed the autopsy of the apparent victim in the March 24 incident at Suez involving a U.S. Navy-chartered vessel. The wounds appear consistent with the 50-caliber warning shots fired from the "Global Patriot" (ref B). NAVCENT NCIS will send a team to Cairo to continue the U.S. investigation. The Egyptian MOD is leading the continuing GOE investigation. The "Global Patriot" exited the Suez Canal late on March 25 en route to the Mediterranean Sea. Public reaction to the shooting has been angry, with the opposition media and online posts blaming the U.S. and Egyptian governments. We issued a press release March 26 expressing deepest condolences to the victim's family. Our March 26 EAC meeting recommended no changes to our security posture in light of the shooting (ref A). End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) On the evening of March 25, two embassy officers witnessed the autopsy of Mohammed Fouad Afifi at the Suez morgue. MOD COS LTG Sami Enan had given orders to allow emboffs' presence at the autopsy (ref B). The emboffs saw a small entry wound on the victim's left breast and three larger exit wounds in his back. The Egyptian forensic pathologist extracted 6 to 8 bullet fragments from the victim's body; we believe these fragments appear to be consistent with bullets fired from the 50-caliber machine gun mounted on the "Global Patriot." Emboffs also viewed the approximately 35-foot vessel the victim was apparently on when he was shot. There was blood on the forward deck seat where the victim sat, and there was a larger amount of blood on the deck in the stern where he was moved. We have photos of the victim and the boat. In the autopsy room, emboffs observed several state security officers; MOD officials closely videotaped the autopsy and all of the emboffs' actions.

[1](#)3. (C) At approximately 8 PM on March 25, the "Global Patriot" exited the Suez Canal and proceeded through Alexandria Harbor en route to the Mediterranean Sea. Egyptian authorities made no requests to stop the U.S. vessel for an investigation, and in fact intervened directly to facilitate the ship's passage through the canal into the Mediterranean. The MOD is currently leading the GOE investigation of the shooting incident, and MOD Assistant Minister for Policy MG Al-Assar has asked us additional questions about the report we submitted March 25 regarding why the "Global Patriot" arrived at the entrance to the Suez

Canal ahead of schedule and why it was nearing a certain anchorage point at the time of the incident (ref B).

¶4. (U) March 26 coverage of the incident in the Egyptian media was extensive, with more prominent treatment in the opposition and independent papers, and on independent television. Pro-government papers gave the story more muted coverage, but state-run television outlets carried angry complaints by citizens and commentators. An opposition paper quoted a Muslim Brotherhood member in Suez accusing the U.S. military of committing terrorism. Other opposition papers accused the U.S. of "crimes," reported that the victim's family is demanding justice, and questioned why the GOE allowed the "Global Patriot" to leave Egyptian waters. According to independent "Al-Masry Al-Youm," twenty-eight independent and opposition MPs called for keeping the "Global Patriot" in Egypt and establishing a fact-finding committee. The parliamentary speaker reportedly said the GOE, not the parliament, has jurisdiction over such issues.

¶5. (U) On a popular online news site, some angry posts blamed the U.S. One post raged, "How dare they trespass on the sovereignty of our lands? Is this the Suez Canal that Abdel Nasser and his fellows defended?...Now the dogs come and kill us in it." Many of the comments took aim at the GOE for negligence, and conflated the incident with separate domestic problems such as unemployment and bread prices.

¶6. (C) The Prime Minister's Office and the Minister of Information contacted the Ambassador late on March 25 to report angry reaction in the People's Assembly. They requested details of the incident, and the Minister of Information asked the Ambassador to phone in to one 10 PM talk show to repeat his statement of condolences and

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cooperation carried earlier in the day by independent Al-Arabiya television. The Ambassador called in to the two most popular shows to repeat that statement, while PAO called in to another one. A/DCM spoke at length with the Prime Minister's Office, providing details of the incident. The Prime Minister's Chief of Staff expressed appreciation.

¶7. (C) We issued a press release March 26, coordinated with NAVCENT and CENTCOM, expressing deepest condolences to the family of the victim, and acknowledging that an Egyptian was apparently killed by the "Global Patriot's" warning shots. The statement says that the incident is under investigation. NAVCENT's March 26 press release says, in part, "we will do our utmost to help take care of the family of the deceased." MFA and parliamentary contacts commented to us that swift public apologies are an important step to address the Egyptian public's anger.

¶8. (C) NAVCENT NCIS will take the USG lead in investigating the incident further, and plans to send a team to Cairo. We expect the team will consist of at least four members, and will be led by an O6 officer. NAVCENT Commander Admiral Cosgriff has authorized a "solatia" or apology payment to the victim's family. Following the completion of the investigation, the family may be eligible for additional payment under the Foreign Claims Act.

¶9. (SBU) There were no demonstrations about the incident in the morning and afternoon of March 26. Our March 26 EAC meeting recommended no changes to our security posture (ref A).

RICCIARDONE